DC BLACK LABEL

SEAN MURPHY WITH
MATT HOLLINGSWORTH

BATMAN™
CURSE OF THE WHITE KNIGHT

BOOK FIVE

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CURSE OF THE WHITE KNIGHT
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GORDON
YOU OFTEN CAN'T APPRECIATE HOW **IMPORTANT** SOMEONE IS WHILE THEY'RE STILL ALIVE.
AND ONLY BY THEIR PASSING DO YOU SUDDENLY REALIZE THE **STAGGERING MAGNITUDE** OF WHAT YOU'VE JUST LOST.
RIGHT NOW, THAT'S EXACTLY HOW GOTHAM CITY FEELS ABOUT THE DEATH OF **JIM GORDON.**
JAMES GORDON
JIM WAS THE BEST OF US. HE HAD **COMPASSION** FOR EVERY CITIZEN AND AN EYE TOWARD THE **FUTURE,** AND HE WAS WILLING TO DO WHATEVER IT TOOK TO GET US THERE.
GOTHAM INSIDER
HE WAS A REMINDER THAT THE SMOLDERING CAULDRON OF GOTHAM CITY DOESN'T JUST CREATE VILLAINS LIKE JOKER AND AZRAEL--IT FORGES **HEROES** LIKE JIM GORDON.

Sean Murphy: Script, Art, Covers
Matt Hollingsworth: Colors & Cover Colors
AndWorld Design: Letters

BATMAN
CURSE OF THE WHITE KNIGHT

BOOK FIVE

Batman created by Bob Kane with Bill Finger

WE'VE BECOME SO POLITICALLY DIVIDED OVER JACK NAPIER AND THE EVENTS OF LAST YEAR--SHOUTING WITH EVER-INCREASING VOLUME, CALLING EACH OTHER NAMES, AND REFUSING TO SEE OURSELVES AS A FAMILY.
WE'RE LIVING IN A **CONSTANT STORM.**
AND LIKE THE EYE OF A HURRICANE PASSING OVERHEAD, JIM GORDON'S DEATH HAS GIVEN US A MOMENT OF CALM.
TODAY, GOTHAM UNITES OVER THE **PAIN** WE'RE ALL FEELING.
IN DANGER? call DUKE 555-BCKPORT 24-HOUR HOTLINE
BUT WE'RE NOT JUST UNITED IN OUR SADNESS--WE'RE UNITED IN OUR **FEAR.**
BECAUSE WE ALL KNOW THE STORM ISN'T OVER. AND IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE SURVIVING WITHOUT JIM GORDON.
HMM, NO SIGN OF BRUCE...
BECAUSE HE'S A **COWARD.**

LAFFY ARKHAM IN THE WOOD...
...EATING CHILDREN WHEN HE COULD...
...UNDERNEATH A MOON OF BLOOD...
...SWEPT AWAY BEFORE THE FLOOD.

FLICK
SAINT
DUMAS

VROOM
WHERE THE **HELL** HAVE YOU BEEN?
JAMES GORDON **DIED** BECAUSE OF YOU! AND YOU'RE TOO BUSY TO ATTEND HIS **GODDAMN FUNERAL?**
BULLOCK--
AND WHAT ABOUT BABS--WHY DIDN'T YOU **WASTE** AZRAEL WHEN YOU HAD THE CHANCE?!
YOU AND BARBARA WENT ROGUE--**THAT'S** WHY SHE'S IN A WHEELCHAIR! AND THAT'S THE KIND OF RECKLESS BEHAVIOR THAT MIGHT GET YOU SUSPENDED.
HE'S **RIGHT.**
I **SHOULD** HAVE BEEN AT THE FUNERAL.
AFTER EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED...I...I JUST WASN'T SURE I'D BE **WELCOME.** I DIDN'T WANT TO CAUSE A FIGHT.
I'M SO SORRY. TO **ALL** OF YOU.
YOU KNOW WHAT MADE GORDON A GREAT LEADER? HE UNDERSTOOD TWO THINGS--**TRUST** AND **COMPROMISE.**
HE ACCEPTED THAT THE GOOD GUYS DIDN'T ALWAYS GET ALONG--THEY JUST NEEDED TO TRUST EACH OTHER. AND THAT MOVING FORWARD SOMETIMES MEANT EMBRACING OUR DIFFERENCES.
SO HOW THE HELL DO WE MOVE FORWARD?
BY FOCUSING ON THE **WORK.**

WE'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT GOTHAM BEGAN AS A SMALL VILLAGE ON THE COAST. THAT'S WHY THE JOURNAL'S MAP IS SO STRANGE--IT PLACES THE VILLAGE IN THE ***WRONG PLACE,*** ON THE EDGE OF A LARGE BAY THAT EXTENDED INLAND. IN AN AREA WE NOW KNOW AS ***GOTHAM RESERVOIR.***
BUT THE JOURNAL IS ACCURATE--I FOUND THE LOST SETTLEMENT BENEATH THE RESERVOIR. SOMEONE TRIED TO ***ERASE*** OUR EARLY HISTORY BY ***FLOODING*** IT.
GOTHAM CITY
GOTHAM VILLAGE
WHO?
"***EDMOND WAYNE.***
"WITH ***ARKHAM*** DEAD, EDMOND HAD RECLAIMED HIS INHERITANCE. BUT RATHER THAN HONORING HIS PROMISE TO GIVE BAKKAR HALF OF GOTHAM, EDMOND KILLED HIM.
"AS LORD OF GOTHAM, HE CONVINCED THE BRITISH TO HELP HIM PURGE THE ENTIRE VALLEY SO THEY COULD TURN IT INTO ONE OF THE MOST ***VALUABLE*** PORTS IN THE NEW WORLD.
"HE ERASED ALL EVIDENCE OF BAKKAR AND THE CHAPEL OF ***ST. DUMAS*** BY DAMMING THE RIVER AND FLOODING THE VALLEY.
"ALL THE VILLAGERS LOST THEIR HOMES. THOSE WHO COULDN'T AFFORD TO LEAVE WERE RESETTLED IN A PLACE WE NOW CALL ***BACKPORT.***
"EDMOND REDREW THE COASTLINE AS THE LAND BELOW THE LAKE DRIED UP. THEN HE BUILT A NEW SETTLEMENT BY SELLING PROPERTY TO THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.
"THAT'S THE ***TRUTH*** ABOUT GOTHAM, ABOUT HOW THE ***WAYNE FORTUNE*** STARTED IN THE NEW WORLD.
"AND THAT'S WHY JOKER SENT AZRAEL AFTER ME--BY REVIVING THE DESCENDANT OF BAKKAR, JOKER WANTS TO ***EXPOSE*** THE COVER-UP AND ***DESTROY*** THE WAYNE LEGACY."

PRETTY WILD THEORY--HOW CAN YOU BE SURE?
THE NARROW PIECE OF LAND THAT SEPARATES THE RESERVOIR FROM GOTHAM CITY ISN'T A **NATURAL** FORMATION.
I ALSO FOUND RECEIPTS AND LEGAL DOCUMENTS FROM THE 1700S--FOR PARCELS OF LAND THAT DIDN'T PREVIOUSLY EXIST.
GTO
I DON'T HAVE THE FREAKIN' PATIENCE FOR THIS...
WHAT?
LAND DEALS? RELIGIOUS CULTS? A **VAMPIRE** NAMED **LAFFY?!**
NOT TO MENTION WHIGS, TORIES, AND SOME UNDERWATER **SCOOBY-DOO** MYSTERY FROM **SIXTEEN-WHO-GIVES-A-SHIT.**
HOW DOES ANY OF THIS HELP US FIND **AZRAEL?**
NOW WE HAVE **MOTIVE.**
JOKER SAID SOMETHING DURING THE INTERROGATION--"GOTHAM IS DROWNING IN SECRETS." IS THIS WHAT HE MEANT?
YES.
WONDER WHY HE GAVE YOU THAT CLUE.
THE CLUE DIDN'T COME FROM **THE JOKER.**
"I REMEMBER WHEN I **FIRST** CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF **JACK NAPIER...**"
SWISH

...HE'D WRITTEN ME A LOVE LETTER. A *CRY FOR HELP.* AND HE WROTE IT ON A PLAYING CARD.
DON'T GIVE UP ON ME. -J
THE THREE OF DIAMONDS.
LOOK FAMILIAR?
YOUR COSTUME.
WEARING THE DIAMONDS WAS A WAY TO REMIND MYSELF THAT NO MATTER HOW BAD IT GOT, JACK NAPIER WAS *ALIVE.*
THAT'S WHY I CREATED THE PILLS LAST YEAR--BECAUSE I THOUGHT WE COULD FINALLY BE *JACK* AND *HARLEEN.*
BUT I *FAILED.*
JOKER WAS RIGHT--I'M WEAK. AND I'LL *ALWAYS* BE THE *VICTIM.*
HE'S WRONG.
YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH THE *DEVIL*. AND NOT ONLY DID YOU SURVIVE, YOU CAME OUT STRONGER-- *YOU BEAT HIM.*
AND YOU CAN DO IT AGAIN.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
JACK'S STILL *ALIVE*--HE'S TRYING TO REACH OUT.
YOU NEED TO TRY AGAIN. YOU NEED TO BRING HIM BACK--
BUT IT DIDN'T WORK LAST TIME.
BECAUSE *I* WAS THERE. JOKER CAN'T RESIST ME.
BUT...I DON'T THINK I CAN DO IT ALONE.
YOU WON'T BE ALONE...

"...YOU'LL HAVE YOUR *CHILDREN.*"
NEW ARKHAM
WHERE IS HE, JACK? WHERE'S *AZRAEL?*
AND THE MESSAGE WRITTEN IN BLOOD--*WHAT DID IT SAY?*
JESUS, *YOU* AGAIN? THOUGHT I MADE MYSELF CLEAR.
WHERE IS HE?
BATMAN'S NOT COMING.
...
YOU KNOW, I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE PRETTY *BORING.* MAYBE THAT'S WHY I KEPT YOU AROUND-- BECAUSE IT MADE *ME* FEEL THAT MUCH MORE *HILARIOUS.*
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WERE THIS *STUPID.*
WHY THE HELL WOULD YOU EVER RISK BRINGING YOUR CHILDREN--WHAT'S TO STOP ME FROM ESCAPING AND KIDNAPPING--
YOU WON'T.
AND WHY'S THAT?
BECAUSE *JACK* WOULDN'T LET YOU.

COME ON, JACK. YOU CAN DO IT.
BWAHAHAHA!
HAHAHAHA!
I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE.
BWAHAHA-HAHA!
IF NOT, THEN YOU'LL NEVER SEE US AGAIN. AND THE ONLY MEMORIES THE CHILDREN WILL HAVE OF THEIR FATHER IS *THIS NIGHTMARE!*
BWAHA-HAHAHA!
OH MY GOD, I LOVE IT...
...THAT *HOPEFUL* LOOK ON YOUR CHERUB FACE.
MAYBE I WAS *WRONG* ABOUT YOU-- YOU'RE FUNNIER THAN I GAVE YOU CREDIT FOR!
OKAY. GOODBYE, JACK.
...I LOVE YOU.
--WAIT.
I LOVE YOU TOO.

BEFORE HE DIED, GORDON PUT A ROUND INTO AZRAEL. DNA FROM THE BLOOD JUST CAME BACK.
ATTA BOY, COMMISH.
GTO
JEAN-PAUL VALLEY--A GREEN BERET WAR VET. SPECIALIZED IN DISRUPTING ENEMY NETWORKS. VIETNAM, RUSSIA, IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN--THE KIND OF OPS GOVERNMENTS DON'T ACKNOWLEDGE.
MILITARY BUDDY HOOKED ME UP WITH CLASSIFIED FILES.
VALLEY
LED A SMALL UNIT CALLED THE **BLOOD ANGELS.**
ALL OF 'EM REAL CHEST BEATERS--EVEN USED BIBLICAL CODE NAMES. MOST OF THEM K.I.A.--ONLY THREE LEFT.
"GABRIEL" IS A DEMOLITIONS SPECIALIST FROM VIETNAM. USED A **MALE CODE NAME** SO ENEMIES WOULDN'T KNOW THEY WERE LOOKING FOR A **WOMAN.**
DIDN'T ALWAYS WORK. CAUGHT, HELD CAPTIVE, AND RAPED FOR A MONTH IN BURMA BEFORE AZRAEL FOUND HER. TWO OF THEM CLEANED OUT THE ENTIRE VILLAGE.
THEN THERE'S "MICHAEL," A PURPLE HEART. HAD HIS LARYNX TORN OUT IN KORENGAL DURING A FIREFIGHT.
AZRAEL TOOK OUT A DOZEN AL QAEDA TO RESCUE HIM--KILLED EACH ONE BY TEARING OUT HIS THROAT.
JESUS--I'M SENSING A REAL "EYE FOR AN EYE" TYPE OF GUY.
WHOEVER'S BACKING HIM IS PROVIDING SOME PRETTY **MAJOR** HARDWARE. CHECK LOCAL WEAPON DEPOTS AND MILITARY SURPLUS.
GTO
ONE MORE THING...
...RECORDS FROM ST. RAPHAEL'S HOSPITAL.
JEAN-PAUL VALLEY HAS CANCER. **TERMINAL.**

THEY'RE SO *BEAUTIFUL,* HARLEY.
I'M SO SORRY I COULDN'T BE THERE.
IT'S OKAY. I HAD BATMAN.
HE WAS ACTUALLY THE ONE WHO *DELIVERED* THEM--HAD A BIT OF AN EMERGENCY WHILE INVESTIGATING LAFFY--
BATMAN DELIVERED MY CHILDREN?!
BORN EXACTLY WHERE JOKER WAS BORN--AT LAFFY'S GRAVE?!
JESUS, IF THAT ISN'T DRIPPING WITH IRONY. MAYBE THERE REALLY IS A CURSE.
NAPIER
I KNOW THERE'S MORE GOING ON HERE THAN WE REALIZE--YOU NEED TO HELP US!
I CAN'T--JOKER KNOWS EVERYTHING I KNOW, BUT IT DOESN'T ALWAYS WORK THE OTHER WAY!
BATMAN HELPED YOU REACH HIM BEFORE. HERE--TAKE MY HAND.
WHERE'S AZRAEL?
I DON'T KNOW!
CONCENTRATE. HE'S A GIANT RELIGIOUS NUT WITH A BIG FLAMING SWORD.
FLAMING SWORD...
FWOOSH
WAIT...
...I REMEMBER A FLAMING CROSS.
...A SWORD LODGED IN A POOL OF HOLY OIL.
GOOD.
SOME OLD CHURCH WITH A GIANT STAINED GLASS WINDOW...

ST. JEROME'S CHAPEL IN OLD GOTHAM! I THINK THAT'S WHERE HE FOUND AZRAEL.
WHAT ABOUT THE MESSAGE ON THE WALL? THE ONE WRITTEN IN BLOOD.
CAN YOU SEE IT?
...
YES.
WHAT DOES IT SAY?
...
OH MY GOD. BUT THAT WOULD MEAN...
...OH NO.
WHAT DOES IT SAY?!
I'LL TELL YOU, BUT YOU *CAN'T* TELL BATMAN.
WHAT? *WHY?*
BECAUSE...
...IT WILL *DESTROY* HIM.

WE'RE ENDING OUR ARRANGEMENT. YOU'VE BECOME A *LIABILITY.*
THIS IS MY LAND AND MY WAR. AND WE'RE DOING IT *MY WAY.*
THERE IS NO WAR WITHOUT *MONEY,* JEAN-PAUL. YOU WERE AN *INVESTMENT* TO FIGHT THE NAPIER INITIATIVE.
WE PAID YOU TO *QUIETLY ELIMINATE* BATMAN SO YOU COULD *REPLACE* HIM...
...NOT TO *WREAK HAVOC* ALL OVER GOTHAM WITH A FLAMING SWORD LIKE SOME *PSYCHO* SET LOOSE IN A RENAISSANCE FAIR!
"HE IS CLOTHED IN A ROBE DIPPED IN BLOOD, AND THE NAME BY WHICH HE IS CALLED IS THE *WORD OF GOD.*
"FROM HIS MOUTH COMES A SHARP SWORD...
"...WITH WHICH TO STRIKE DOWN THE NATIONS...
"...AND HE WILL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON."
REVELATIONS.
I WAS HOPING TO BE *CIVIL* ABOUT THIS, JEAN-PAUL. BUT IF YOU WANT, WE CAN DO THIS YOUR WAY.

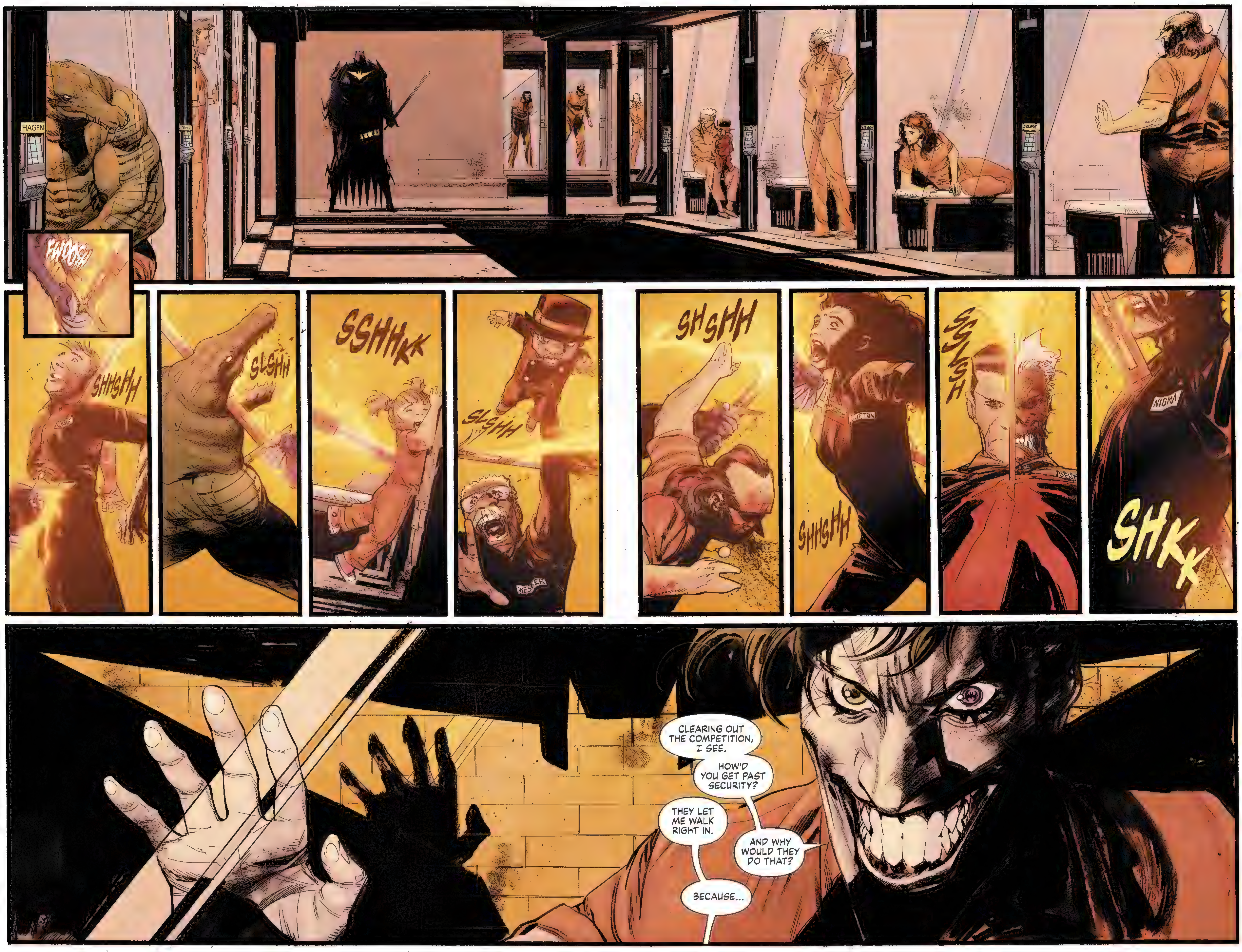
THUDD
YOU KNOW I NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY JOKER WOULD WANT A HOMELESS, CANCEROUS JESUS FREAK TO GO AFTER SOMEONE AS TOUGH AS **BATMAN.**
BUT THEN I REALIZED JOKER DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO **WIN**--HE JUST WANTED YOU TO SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH TO UPEND EVERYTHING ABOUT **BRUCE WAYNE.**
SO I HIRED BANE--TO TAKE OVER WHEN YOU **FAILED.**
THOKK
MERCENARIES ARE **WEAK**--THEY ONLY WORSHIP MONEY.
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
YOU THINK I'M WEAK?
THEN LET'S TURN UP THE **JUICE** A LITTLE.

CRASH
"...THE FIRE MUST BE KEPT BURNING ON THE ALTAR CONTINUOUSLY. IT...
"...IT MUST NOT GO OUT..."
HAHA--YOUR FAITH IS YOUR WEAKNESS.
GOD WILL SAVE ME...
GOD CAN DO WHATEVER HE WANTS WITH YOU...
...AFTER I BREAK YOU.

THAK
ARGH!
I'VE KNOWN MANY MERCENARIES--THEY WERE PRIDEFUL AND TOOK UNNECESSARY RISKS...
ARRRRGGHHHHH!
...AND OFTEN LEFT THEMSELVES *EXPOSED.*
FWOOSH!
THE EXPOSED TUBE IS A CHALLENGE TO MY ENEMIES...TO COME IN CLOSE IF THEY DARE TO CUT IT.
CHALLENGE ACCEPTED.
HACK

BRING HER OVER HERE.
JEAN-PAUL-- PLEASE DON'T.
SHOVE!
SHINK
THERE'S A SPECIAL FORM OF **NAPALM** INSIDE THE SCABBARD. WHEN I PULL THE SWORD, I PUSH A BUTTON WHICH IGNITES THE BLADE.
SHINK
IF I **DON'T** PUSH THE BUTTON, THEN NO FLAMES.
JP, PLEASE DON'T DO THIS...
BUT IT'S STILL COATED IN NAPALM, SO IT CAN STILL BE IGNITED, EVEN BY SOMETHING AS **SMALL** AS A CANDLE--
WHAT DO YOU WANT?!
I WANT A LIST OF YOUR CLIENTS. THE NAMES OF EVERY ELITE.
WHAT FOR?
"NOW LISTEN, YOU RICH PEOPLE, WEEP AND WAIL BECAUSE OF THE MISERY THAT IS COMING ON YOU.
"YOUR WEALTH HAS ROTTED, AND MOTHS HAVE EATEN YOUR CLOTHES. YOUR GOLD AND SILVER ARE CORRODED...
"...AND THAT CORROSION WILL EAT YOUR FLESH LIKE FIRE."
WAIT, I'LL TELL YOU!
I WOULD HURRY.

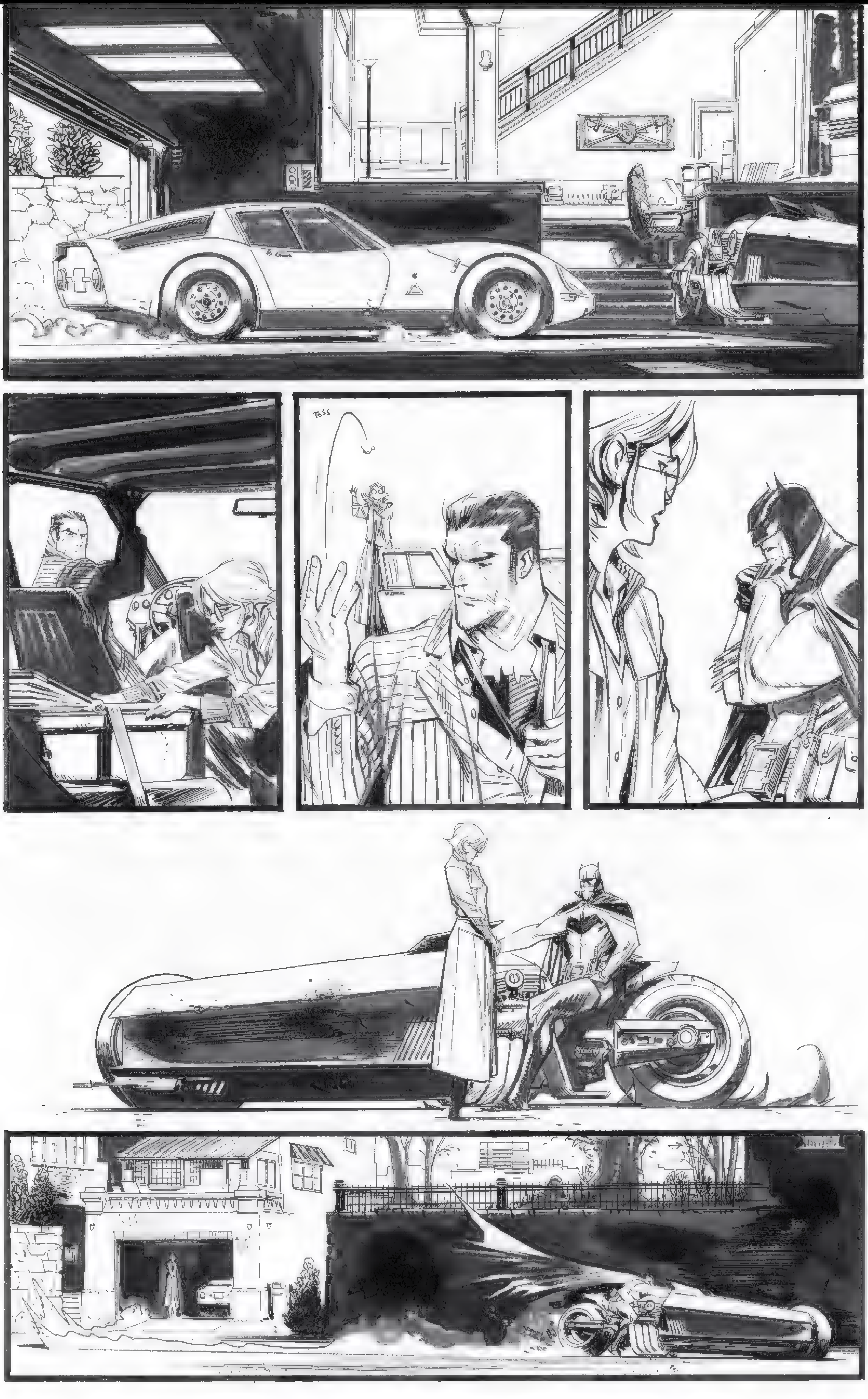
DID IT WORK?
YOU WERE RIGHT. JACK'S *ALIVE.*
AND HE TOLD ME WHERE JOKER FOUND AZRAEL.
NEW ARKHAM
GOOD WORK.
WHAT ABOUT THE MESSAGE ON THE WALL?
...
HE DOESN'T KNOW.
BUT JACK SAID HE'LL TRY TO HELP US IN OTHER WAYS.
HOW?
I DON'T KNOW--WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.
HOW CAN WE TRUST HIM?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRUST *HIM,* BATS...
...JUST TRUST *ME.*


HAGEN
FWOOSH
SHHSHH
SLSHH
SSHHKK
SLSHH
WESKER
SHSHH
SUTTON
SHHSHH
SSLSH
NIGMA
SHKK
CLEARING OUT THE COMPETITION, I SEE.
HOW'D YOU GET PAST SECURITY?
THEY LET ME WALK RIGHT IN.
AND WHY WOULD THEY DO THAT?
BECAUSE...

...I'M BATMAN.

NEXT ISSUE:

Black-and-white art for BATMAN: CURSE OF THE WHITE KNIGHT #6 by Sean Murphy



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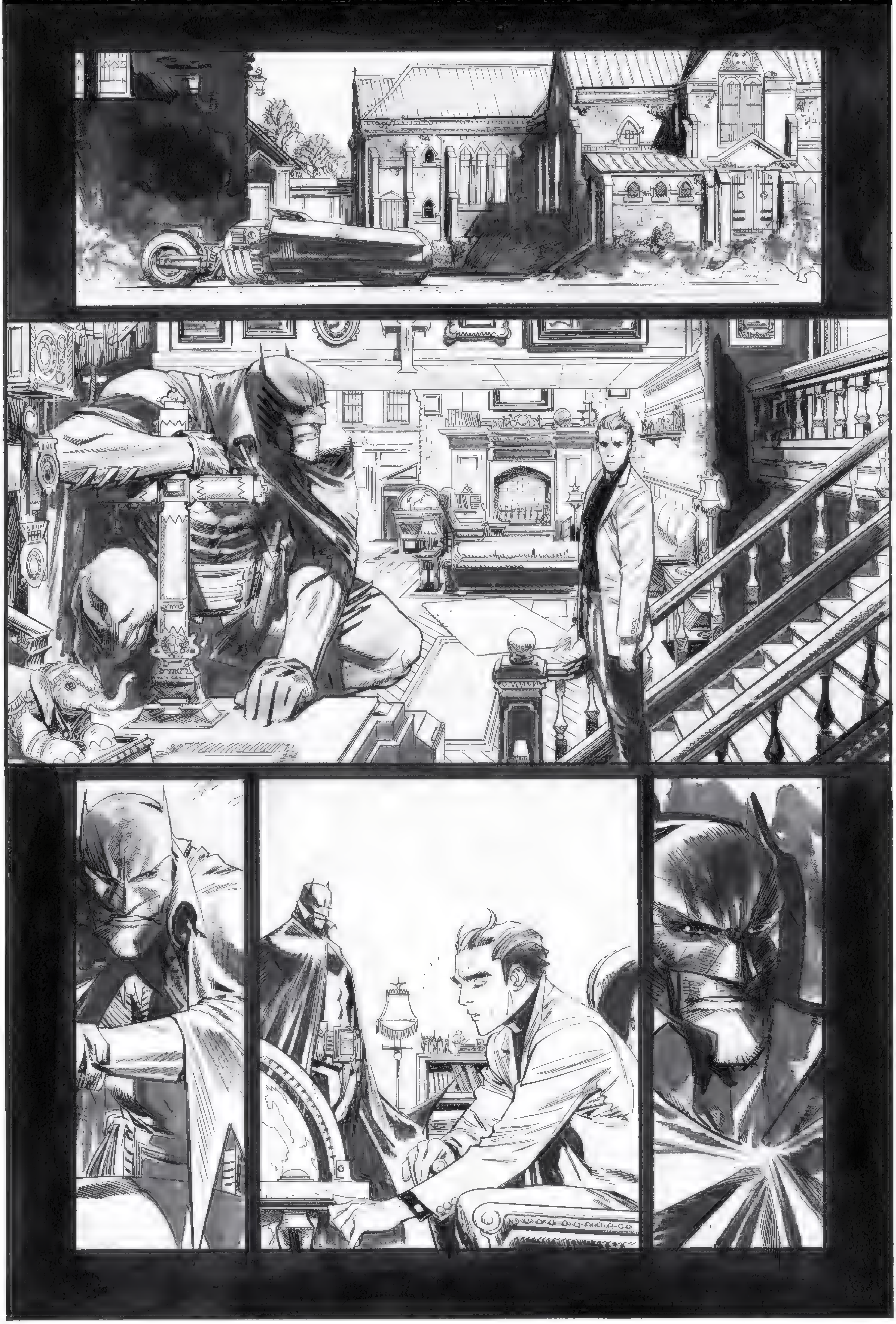

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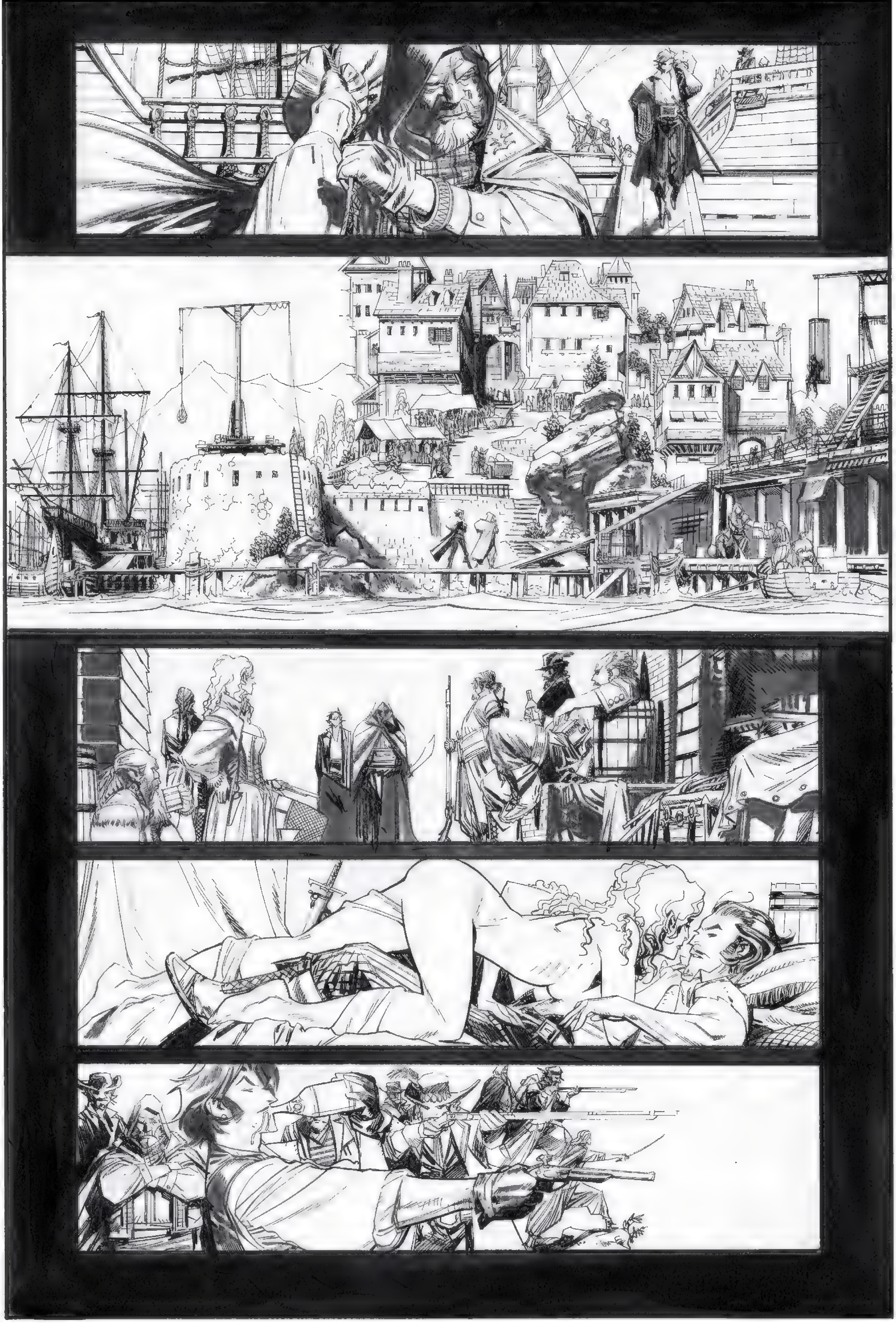

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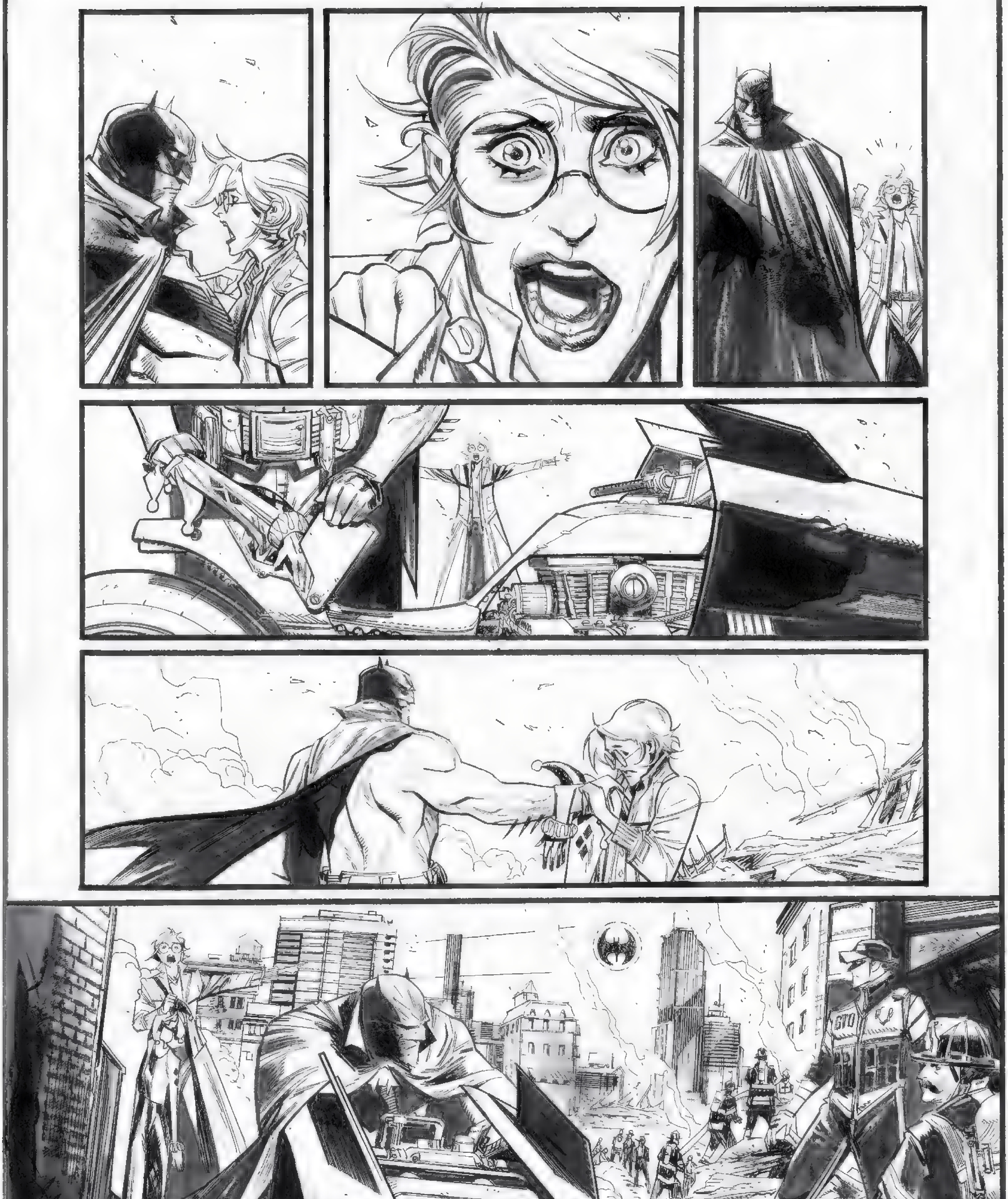

BATGIRL

Written & illustrated by

SEAN MURPHY

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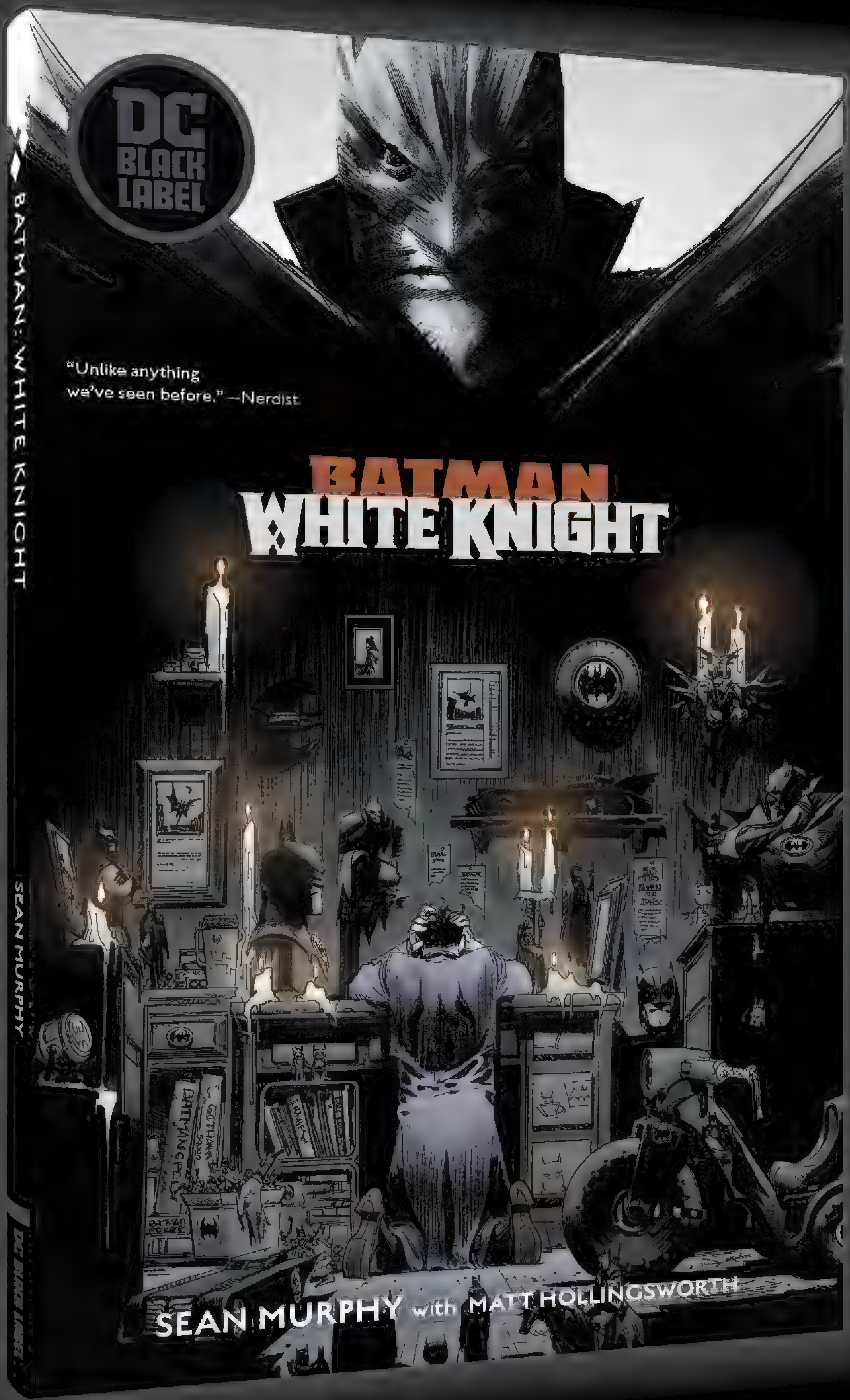
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WHITE KNIGHT
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BATMAN: WHITE KNIGHT
SEAN MURPHY

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—A.V. Club

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—IGN

"A breakout hit."
—SyFy Wire

"Holy cow do you get your money's worth."
—Nerdist

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